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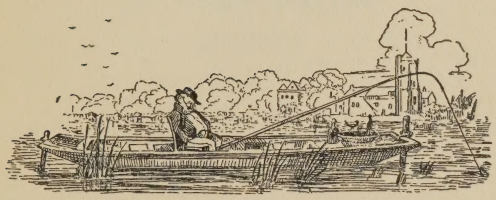
WHEN MR. PICKWICK
WENT FISHING

WHEN MR. PICKWICK WENT FISHING

By

SAMUEL W. LAMBERT

With Eleven Illustrations by
ROBERT SEYMOUR



Edmond Byrne Hackett
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1924

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Brattleboro
Vermont

UPB

To

E. W. L.

in

appreciation

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Preface

The story of Dickens' first and most tragic literary controversy came to the author's knowledge in the roundabout way described in the following pages. The more the facts were investigated the more it became evident that an entirely erroneous story of the beginnings of the Pickwick Papers is presented by every recent critic and analyst of the work of Charles Dickens. No apology seems necessary for writing the true narration of the Dickens-Seymour controversy which resulted in the death of Seymour and which was hidden and ignored as far as possible by publisher and author. The great and immediate success of Pickwick concealed a knowledge of the facts from the reading public, and when Seymour's family and friends tried to present his claims for recognition it was too late to secure a hearing.

This little book has been produced in the unoccupied intervals of a busy professional life. Its publication is the result of an urging from a few personal friends. Since its printing was decided upon a constant stimulus to look into further quotations from the Pickwick Papers and to new research in contemporary writers was found in the kindly suggestions of John C. C. Fletcher of the Brick Row Book Shop, Inc. The book is the better for his sympathy.

WHEN MR. PICKWICK
WENT FISHING

When Mr. Pickwick Went Fishing

Birth of Pickwick

A NEW character, Mr. Pickwick, was born into the land of English letters on March 31, 1836. He was introduced as the president of a sporting club by the publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall. His portraits were from the pencil of a well-known caricaturist, Robert Seymour, and the history of the Club was written anonymously, under the *nom de plume* of Boz. The story is conspicuously dated in the years of 1827-28 and its episodes have been carefully arranged by Percy Fitzgerald as occurring between the dates of May 12, 1827, and August 8, 1828. Of course the date is immaterial and is set ten years too soon in order to avoid any seeming allusion to contemporaries.

Pickwick Papers

Every student of Dickens would place the birth of Mr. Pickwick as coincident with the appearance of the first serial part of the *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. In fact, it must be admitted that so far as the world of literature is concerned, Mr. Pickwick then first drew the attention of that world to himself and actually became famous, as also did the young author who recorded his experiences. The name of Pickwick immediately calls to mind a gentleman approaching sixty years of age, who, whether in prison or at home, whether in the morning, at noon or in the evening, whether staying quietly in his lodgings in Goswell Street or at the watering place, Bath, or accompanying his friends on a shooting expedition, or even when traveling, is always attired in the same costume. Mr. Pickwick is a man of independent means, but whatever number of

suits of clothes he may possess, each is the duplicate of every other one. If one depends on Boz to describe him when Mr. Pickwick is introduced to the reader, one gets a very inadequate picture; a benevolent look, a bald head, a pair of circular spectacles, tights, gaiters and a tail coat.

Portraits of Pickwick

But when one turns to the portraits by Seymour, in the first illustrations of the book, one immediately is impressed with the never-to-be-forgotten personality of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C., M.P.C., General Chairman, Member of the Pickwick Club. No one could guess from what Boz wrote whether the founder of this famous club were thin or fat, tall or short, bewhiskered or clean shaven. But Seymour knew Mr. Pickwick well, and had no hesitation in portraying him in five of the eight plates he prepared for the book, and the artists who have drawn his

Various Artists

portrait since Seymour's untimely death have not departed from this original. All, from the earliest, Hablot K. Browne and T. Onwhyn in the thirties to F. O. C. Darley in the sixties, F. W. Pailthorpe in the eighties and the more recent Claude Lovat Fraser in the present century, have followed Seymour's caricature of the retired tradesman in every detail. No other of Dickens' characters is so thoroughly and intimately known as is Mr. Pickwick. The share of the artists who have illustrated the various editions of the Pickwick Papers in bringing about this widely spread acquaintance of the hero in Dickens' first and greatest success, has been subject to some discussion and controversy. Such a question can hardly arise in the later novels of Dickens, for in proportion as the genius of Dickens developed, his characters make their personalities felt more and more through the

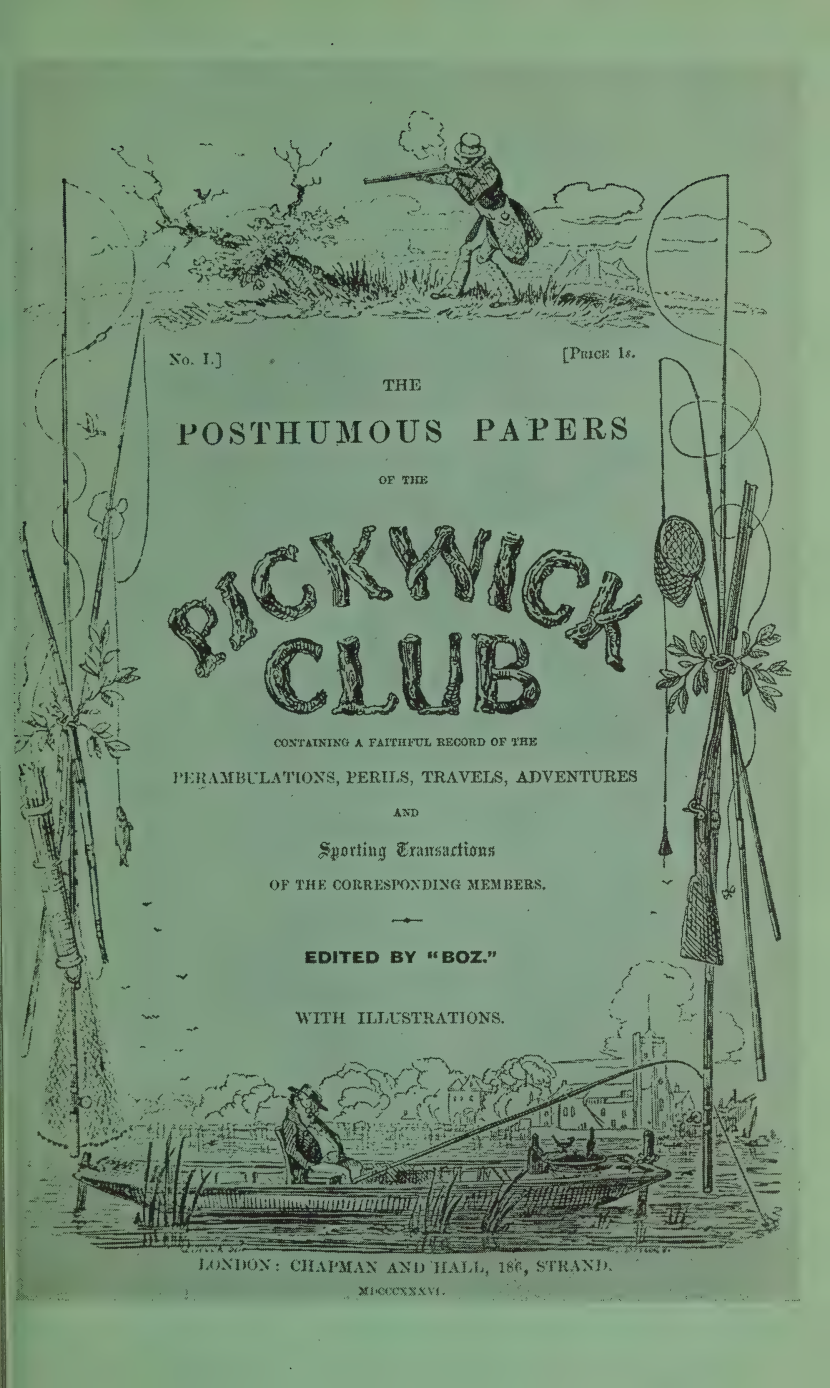
work of the author and less from that of the collaborating artists.

Chapman and Hall

Mr. Pickwick was first introduced by Chapman and Hall in a green "coat" which from the point of view of Pickwick as a sportsman and an angler will bear intimate study. The twenty numbers of the original edition issued in parts, were all published in the same green cover which had been designed by Seymour with the evident purpose of forecasting the character of the work and advertising it. The collation of these covers now much prized by collectors of first editions is: "The / Posthumous Papers / of the Pickwick / Club / containing a faithful record of the / Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures / and / Sporting Transactions / of the Corresponding Members. Edited by 'BOZ' / with illustrations / London, Chapman and Hall, 186 Strand / MDCCCXXXVI." This cover

The Pickwick Sporting Club

is illustrated and has at the top a rough sketch of someone, presumably Mr. Winkle, shooting a bird, which looks like a sparrow but which should be a rook. At the bottom there is quite prominently displayed a drawing of Mr. Pickwick fast asleep, alone in a punt securely tied to two posts. His fishing rod, though balanced over the stern, is bending, and his dobber and line, unwatched on the water, are being pulled by an unseen fish. The remains of his substantial lunch, including an empty bottle of malt liquor, is spread out on the stern seat, where two birds have just perched to investigate and pick up the few crumbs that remain. The scene is set on the Thames just off the bridge and church at Putney. The sides of this suggestive green cover are decorated with fly rods and bait rods with nets and with a gun, a bow and a quiver of arrows, and there is every evidence



No. I.] [Price 1s.

THE

POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF THE

PICKWICK CLUB

CONTAINING A FAITHFUL RECORD OF THE

PERAMBULATIONS, PERILS, TRAVELS, ADVENTURES

AND

Sporting Transactions

OF THE CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

EDITED BY "BOZ."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.

MDCCCXXXVI.

that a devotion to sport is intended to be the chief characteristic of the Pickwickians.

Original Paper Cover

The reproduction here given is that of one of the later reprints and not of the cover of the first printing of four hundred copies. The original covers of the first three numbers are very rare. In place of the line "with illustrations," as given above the reading on No. 1, is "with four illustrations by Seymour," that on No. 2, is "with three illustrations by Seymour," and on No. 3, this line reads "with two illustrations by R. W. Buss." All reference to the collaborating artists is omitted from all subsequent numbers and from the reissues of the first three. The name of Hablot K. Browne or his pseudonym, Nemo or Phiz, does not appear on any of the green covers of the sixteen serial issues illustrated by him.

The story of Mr. Winkle shoot-

Absence of Angling Records

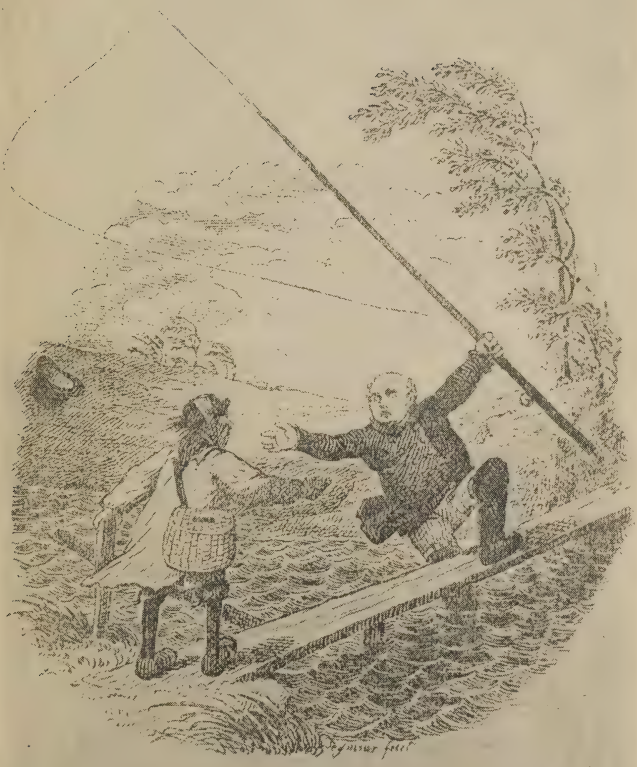
ing at the rook and hitting Mr. Tupman in the arm is written in the first published number of the serial record of the Pickwick Club, but nowhere in the whole story is there the slightest reference to the occasion when Mr. Pickwick went fishing. The drawing on the green cover is humorous enough to have attracted the eye of the humorous Boz, but it seems never to have done so, though it retained its outstanding position to the end of the fifty-six chapters of this publication and to the dissolution of the Club. In spite of this prominence given on the illustrated wrappers to fishing tackle of all kinds, and to Mr. Pickwick a-fishing, there is no mention in the whole narrative of angling and no reference to any one of the 360 characters introduced as being a fisherman. Fish are mentioned, but usually only as articles of food. Jingle, at the first dinner of the traveling Club at the Bull

Fish but no Fishing

Inn, in the High Street at Rochester, praises a dish of soles as "capital fish—all come from London—dozens of baskets," but quickly drops the subject to suggest "Glass of wine, Sir?" Mr. Pickwick carries a "huge codfish, and a half dozen barrels of native oysters" from London to Muggleton as a Christmas gift to Mr. Wardle. The Wellers, father and son, discuss the gastronomic habits of the poor. Sammy claims that "ven a man's very poor he rushes out of his lodgings and eats oysters in regular desperation," to which Weller senior replies, "and it's just the same vith pickled salmon." Trout are mentioned only twice: once notice is taken of the ornamental "mortal remains of a trout in a glass coffin" on the mantleshelf of the commercial room of the Peacock Inn, at Eatonswill, and a second time in Sam Weller's description, in a Pickwickian sense,

The Stimulating Salmon

of Job Trotter as being as "convivial as a live trout in a lime basket." Towards the end of the book Dickens has inserted the story of the bagman's uncle, which has no relation whatever to the context, or to the adventures of Samuel Pickwick. In it the one-eyed bagman describes a supper at a Scotch baillies'. "It was a glorious supper. There was Kippered Salmon and Finnan haddocks and a lambs head, and a haggis." And in an earlier chapter Mr. Snodgrass lays the cause of the hilarity after the cricket dinner to the fish, and as Boz comments "somehow or other it never is the wine in these cases." To Jingle's staccato explanations of "Cricket Dinner—glorious party—capital songs—old port—claret—good—very good—wine, Ma'am—wine. 'It wasn't the wine' murmured Mr. Snodgrass in a broken voice, 'It was the salmon.' " Mr. Pickwick also



I

Walking on a windy day, over an old foot Bridge.

PICKWICK THE ANGLER

refers to the principal production of Stroud, Rochester, Chatham and Brampton and to the public sale in the markets there, as consisting of marine stores, hard bake, apples, flatfish and oysters.

Shooting Record of Pickwick Club

The Club went shooting a second time, poaching on the estate of Captain Boldwig, and the account of this adventure is Pickwickian to the highest degree, ending with the impounding of Mr. Pickwick, while intoxicated, in the public pound in association with two strayed asses and three pigs, from which predicament he was rescued by the inimitable Sam Weller. There is only one other sporting reference in the whole collection of Pickwick Papers; this occurs in the first number and is known as the story of the sagacious dog. The reference is to a casual remark of the secondary character, the sponger, Jingle. In spite of the insignificance of the incident as

a part of the story, it is illustrated by one of Seymour's best and most humorous drawings. It is strange, however, that the sportsman with the dog is a representation of the Pickwickian Winkle and not of Jingle, the raconteur of the incident which is described as a personal experience of Jingle himself. These inconsistencies between the few records of the sporting transactions of the Pickwick Club as recited by Boz, and the illustrations of the same as depicted by Seymour, together with the absence of all reference, in the completed book, to Mr. Pickwick as an angler, in spite of the very humorous portrayal of that hero fishing from a punt, on the illustrated title cover, have never been explained in a satisfactory manner by any of the friendly critics or admiring worshippers of Charles Dickens or by Charles Dickens himself.

Pickwick not an Angler

The two questions: When was

Questions of Doubt

Pickwick born into the literary world? and When did he go fishing? cannot be solved by a study of the *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club,* but a search of English literature of the early thirties throws some interesting light on both these questions, and on the circumstances attending the origin and development of the first great publication of Boz. In the winter of 1919, I visited a very attractive book store. The collection of books relating to angling, and especially to those more intimately Waltonian, was becoming a special interest with me. A first edition of a little book, *Maxims and Hints for An Angler and Miseries Of Fishing, to which are added Maxims and Hints for a Chess Player,* was offered for sale. The enthusiastic bookseller called my attention to the illustrations as showing the influence of the Pickwick Papers even on such a remote sub-

ject as angling. The resemblance to Mr. Pickwick of some of the anglers portrayed in various difficulties, was quite striking, and I was glad to become the possessor of the little book.

Richard Penn

A more detailed study of the book revealed that it is the anonymous work of Richard Penn, who was a descendant of William Penn, and an enthusiastic angler, and that his book was a reprinting of minutes from the Common Place Book of the Houghton Fishing Club. But a real surprise was in store when it was also discovered that the book was illustrated by Robert Seymour, and was published in 1833, three years before the publication of the Pickwick Papers. The book does not show the influence of Pickwick on angling; it is, on the contrary, a story of some of the angling experiences of Mr. Pickwick himself, when he was a young man, and before he was led

ii.

...do not shew yourself to them.

PICKWICK THE ANGLER

astray by Charles Dickens into an increasing alcoholic career, and sadly deceived by designing females while trailing his companions, Tupman, Snodgrass and Winkle, through their pursuits of the feminine in the prim methods of the early nineteenth century.

Pickwick the Angler

Even as a fisherman, Mr. Pickwick could not keep out of trouble and we find him portraying the first misery: "I. Feeling rather unsteady whilst you are walking on a windy day over an old footbridge, and having occasion to regret the decayed state of the hand-rail which once protected the passing fisherman." The illustration shows Mr. Pickwick having lost his hat and spectacles, slipping off a narrow footbridge into the water with every prospect of sitting down in the middle of the stream. But Mr. Pickwick as a young man was also a beginner once, and we find him caricatured in the company

of Penn and Seymour, as the bungler of the first and second Maxims. "I. Are there any fish in the river to which you are going?" "II. Having settled the above question in the affirmative, get some person who knows the water to show you whereabout the fish usually lie and when he shows them to you, do not show yourself to them." In this illustration of angling Maxims I and II, we find Samuel Pickwick, rod in hand, clad in tight breeches, with expansive waistcoat, circular spectacles and frock coat, standing in full view of any fish that may be concealed beneath the calm surface of the stream which mirrors Mr. Pickwick from the feet up.

Pickwick the Chess Player

Still another hitherto unappreciated characteristic of Mr. Pickwick is brought out by his fishing trips with Messrs. Penn and Seymour, and we find him playing chess in the evening after a day on

the river. His portrayal as a chess player is surrounded by a frame with a background of fishing tackle and cat-tail river weeds. Mr. Pickwick's companion is a tall thin man who is evidently getting the worst of the game, while Mr. Pickwick, dressed in his characteristic costume, is smiling benignantly through his round spectacles at his discomfited companion. It is quite evident that Mr. Pickwick had many lovable characteristics which were quite beyond the appreciation of Charles Dickens, or at least which were entirely neglected by him in the records of the Pickwick Club.

Thomas K. Hervey

A very charming recital of the celebration of the Christmas holidays and festivals was written by Thomas K. Hervey and published under the title of *The Book of Christmas* by William Spooner to meet the holiday demand for such a book at the Christmas season of

Pickwick the Holiday Guest

1835, although the book is dated as of 1836. The first edition is illustrated by Robert Seymour. It begins with the old-fashioned holiday of St. Thomas' Day (December 21), and carries the festivities through St. Stephen's Day, Christmas and the New Year, to include Twelfth Night and its follies, and also the succeeding rough sports of St. Distaff Day (January 7), and of the following Monday, when work was renewed on Plough or Black Monday. In one of the illustrations known as "Enjoying Christmas," we discover that Samuel Pickwick spent Christmas with friends, not later than December, 1835, and that Robert Seymour and Thomas Hervey must have been present also as invited guests. For here one finds Mr. Pickwick sitting before an open grate of coals, with one foot on the side of the fireplace, with the book of Christmas in one

Pickwick the Chess Player

hand and a reading candle in the other, while on the table beside him there awaits his pleasure and his thirst a steaming glass of hot Scotch or other toddy. Mr. Pickwick then was far from unknown when Boz, the cub reporter of twenty-three years of age, was asked to record the perambulations, perils, travels, adventures and sporting transactions of the corresponding members of the Pickwick Club.

Charles Tilt

Charles Tilt published a series of 260 humorous lithographs by Seymour about the year 1835 which were known as *New Readings of Old Authors*. In these, Seymour has given with his pencil impossible but highly comical twists to various quotations from the plays of Shakespere. Several show the trend of Seymour's mental processes towards the grotesque in sport, during the years just prior to the publication of the

Pickwick the Pickwickian

Pickwick Papers. Two of these, at least, portray his fat friend Samuel Pickwick in an absurd combination of Shakesperean tragedy and Pickwickian nonsense. One drawing purports to illustrate a quotation from King Lear. Mr. Pickwick is found protecting with his umbrella some ducks from a shower of rain, over the legend, "Nay, good my Lord, your charity o'ershoots itself." In the second, Mr. Pickwick is shut out from his place on the top of a coach which may be assumed to belong to the famous Moses Pickwick, and to be on the eve of its departure from London to Bath. The situation as pictured leads Mr. Pickwick to quote from the soliloquy of Iago at the end of the first scene of Act II, of Shakespere's play of Othello. "I do suspect the lusty Moor hath leapt into my seat."

Mr. Pickwick's antecedents are barely mentioned in the Pickwick

Papers and it is strange that no statement of his feelings is recorded when he, who had previously served as a warder in Camberwell gaol, was committed to the Fleet. In the *Squib Annual* for 1836, published in the fall of 1835, under the heading of the Silent System, we find Mr. Pickwick in the full Pickwickian costume so well known to all his friends and admirers, drawn by the pencil of Robert Seymour as the Keeper of the gaol. This was being published by Chapman and Hall while the idea of the "Nimrod Club," later styled the Pickwick Club, was germinating in the minds of those publishers and of Seymour. Mr. Pickwick as Keeper of the gaol stands in the doorway and is enforcing on his prisoners the law of Silence while they remain incarcerated in Camberwell. Many of them, including dogs, a jackass, children, men and women, are

Pickwick the Gaoler

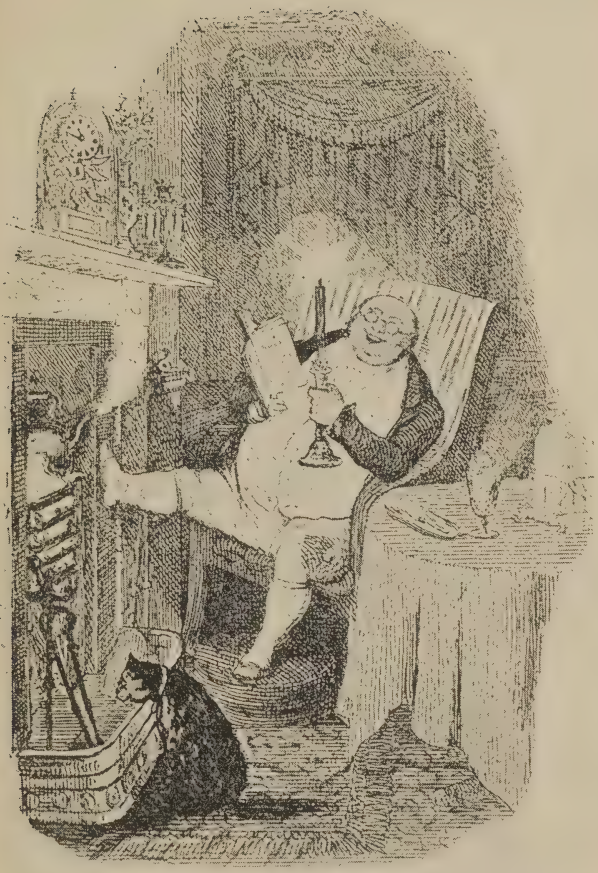
muzzled; one of them, a cockney urchin, describes the Silent System thus:

"And vhen I comed for three long months
Sent here by Ald'man Cowan
The Keepers say 'You mustn't speak'
But it's no fault of Ourn.

"For every cove as is in 'ere
His patter quite controls
And if you dares to spin a yarn
They'll stop your grub by goles."

Dickens' First Literary War

It might seem fitting to follow this Silent System and let the past rest in peace and not to discuss a disagreeable subject in print after many years and numerous writers have endorsed the alleged truths as usually recited concerning the origin of the Pickwick Papers. For the bringing together of these early published portrayals of Mr. Pickwick, and the discovery that he was



Enjoying Christmas

PICKWICK THE HOLIDAY GUEST

an old friend of Seymour's long before 1836 has led me to a knowledge of an old and acrimonious controversy between the family and friends of the deceased artist Seymour and the author of the Pickwick Papers, his publishers and his friends. It seems, however, not without interest to abandon a system of silence and to bring certain facts concerning this unfortunate episode, which were never widely known or have been forgotten, again into publicity.

Robert Seymour

The human characters in what may be called the tragedy of Pickwick are quite distinct from the imaginary persons introduced into the well-known farce. Robert Seymour in 1836 was thirty-eight years old; he was born probably in London in 1798. His parents came from Somersetshire. He was a well-known caricaturist, who portrayed, in a broad and somewhat rough manner, many phases of London

life. He had a distinct bent towards sporting subjects, especially hunting and fishing, but he had also been active in presenting with his pencil humorous twists to familiar quotations from older English authors, particularly Shakespere, and in drawing political cartoons. He drew at first under the pseudonym of Shortshanks, but dropped this signature for his own name out of deference to the wishes of his friend George Cruikshank.

George Cruikshank

Between 1827 and 1836 he was a prolific etcher on copper and he published many drawings on stone in conjunction with a number of authors. Seymour was an ardent follower of Isaac Walton and an expert bird shot. He had no patience with stupid, untrained and unskillful sportsmen. He had a high-strung nervous system and had previously fallen out with the literary collaborators in his work,

Gilbert A'Becket

notably on one occasion with Gilbert Abbott A'Becket, the editor of *Figaro in London*. He was of the temperament known as manic-depressive and his death by suicide was unquestionably induced by an acute melancholy. Seymour brought to Chapman and Hall the original suggestion of a publication in monthly numbers to present the troubles and stupidities of a club of cockney sportsmen. He expected to publish four drawings each month, and consulted with Messrs. Chapman and Hall as to whom they should invite to write a description of his humorous sporting plates. He unquestionably showed to these publishers some of the proposed drawings for the publication, including one of a long thin angler and the illustrated cover for the publication with its very characteristic portrayal of Mr. Pickwick fishing in his punt.

In the *Dictionary of National*

R. S. Surtees

Biography, under the name of R. S. Surtees, a suggestion is made concerning the activation of Robert Seymour which led him to propose the publication of the sporting adventures of a Nimrod Club. The idea is advanced that Surtees, in the year 1831, "started in conjunction with Rudolph Ackermann, the new sporting magazine which Surtees edited down to 1836. Between July 1831 and September 1834 he developed in these pages, the humorous character of Mr. John Jorrocks, a sporting grocer—the quintessence of cockney vulgarity, good humor, absurdity and cunning. The success of the sketches led to the conception of a similar scheme by Chapman and Seymour which resulted in the Pickwick Papers." It seems quite probable that Seymour was influenced in this manner to bring the original idea to Chapman and Hall, who had just published the *Squib Annual* of

"Nay good my Lord your charity o'ershoots itself"

King Lear Act. I. Sc. I.

PICKWICK THE PICKWICKIAN

1835, containing twelve plates by Seymour.

Edward Chapman

Edward Chapman was born in 1803. He was the ranking member of the publishing firm which had been founded in 1834, and which undertook the contract for the new serial now known as the *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. The second member of the firm was William Hall of Manor Lodge, Halloway, who was born in 1801. In 1836, therefore, Chapman was thirty-two years old, and Hall was thirty-five. It was Hall who sought out Dickens after at least one literary man, William Clarke, the author of *Three Courses and a Dessert,* had refused to undertake the job of writing the new serial, but it was Chapman who in later years, after Hall's death in 1844, carried on the traditions of his firm. Chapman was an amiable, retiring, simple-minded man who appreci-

William Hall

ated the best in art and literature. He was well grounded in general knowledge and took a great interest in his garden and the grounds about his country home. He was essentially a family man, and according to Fitzgerald, he was the prototype of the final Mr. Pickwick as the latter was developed by the pen of Boz from an irritable, inquisitive and prying individual into a bland, benign and comfortably-minded man.

John Forster

John Forster, the intimate friend of Charles Dickens, was about his age, having been born two months later, on April 17, 1812. He received a careful education in law, chiefly at University College, London, through the interest of his uncle John, for whom he had been named. He began writing at fifteen years of age, had a play produced when he was sixteen, and at twenty was on terms of intimacy with Charles Lamb and

Leigh Hunt. In 1836 he published the first of five volumes on the Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth. He devoted his literary talents to writing biography and editing various periodicals.

Forster-Dickens Friendship

Forster and Dickens did not meet until 1836, when Dickens was publishing, coincidently, the twelfth number of Pickwick, and the second of Oliver Twist. They became intimate friends at once, and thereafter Forster read all of Dickens' manuscripts throughout the latter's entire literary career. It is no stretch of the imagination to say that after that date John Forster edited all of Dickens' work. He has recorded, in his life of Dickens, the meticulous care with which he read the manuscripts. Although differences of opinion arose between them as to the best form of expression to be used, the friendship of these two men stands out as a remarkable combination of

Forster Collection of Dickensiana

literary effort, which endured through the whole life of both. At the time of his death, Forster had in his possession nearly a complete collection of the original manuscripts of Dickens' novels which, with a valuable library of some 18,000 books and an enormous number of engravings and drawings, make up the chief part of the Forster Collection. These were bequeathed by the owner to the British nation and are now kept in the South Kensington Museum. Forster was generous and loyal to his friends, although he had a blustering voice and rough manner, and presented, on first impression, a stern and arbitrary exterior. As will be shown later he was intolerant of anything which he conceived to be a detraction from the repute and memory of his friend and hero, Boz.

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, at Landport,

C. E. Madeley lith. 5 Wellington St. Strand

"I do suspect the lusty Moor hath leapt into my seat"

Othello Act 2. S. 1.

PICKWICK THE PICKWICKIAN

Charles Dickens

Portsea, and was transplanted to London when two years old. He lived in Chatham from his fourth to his ninth year, and again in London from 1821 to 1836. He was essentially a London-bred boy. He was just twenty-four years old when the first number of Pickwick appeared, and he jumped into immediate fame as a literary success from the obscurity of newspaper reporter and author of a few short stories which had been issued in several different magazines. Dickens' life is tied inextricably to his novels, and is so well known through the intimate biography published in 1871-1874, by John Forster, that much detail would be superfluous. From the viewpoint of the origin of the Pickwick Club it is important only to note that Samuel Pickwick, aged sixty, more or less, and Charles Dickens, aged not quite twenty-four, were acquainted with each other for a very

few weeks when they became famous on March 31, 1836; that both had led obscure lives up to that time, the one as a humble sportsman and retired business man, the other as a beginner in the whirl of literary London. Their acquaintance was of great mutual benefit and dates from the moment they were introduced to each other by Robert Seymour, the artist, and William Hall, of the firm of Chapman and Hall, the publishers.

Dickens' Later Literary Wars

Charles Dickens proved, from the very beginning of his successful career, a difficult man with whom to do business. When contracts were more profitable to the publishing owner of the copyright of his works than seemed fitting to the author, Dickens emphatically proclaimed to his friend and adviser, Forster, "I do most solemnly declare that morally before God and man I hold myself released from such hard bargains." He

bought out the original publishers of *Oliver Twist* and *Sketches by Boz,* and made contracts thereafter, very favorable to himself, with Chapman and Hall, the publishers of Pickwick. But his pugnacity led him later into similar controversies with other publishers, and finally with Chapman and Hall also. For fifteen years, beginning in 1844, Dickens severed his business connection with Chapman and Hall and made his contracts with Bradbury and Evans for his publications. In 1859 he returned to his first publishers, and until his death that firm again conducted all his publishing for him.

Bradbury and Evans

On the occasion of his first visit to the United States he made many enemies among American authors and newspaper men by his strictures on the lack of an international copyright law and the consequent financial loss to himself. After his return home he pub-

Dickens' First Visit to United States

lished *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* and thus followed the advice of Tony Weller, when planning to abduct Mr. Pickwick and send him to the United States so as to avoid trial in the case of Bardell vs. Pickwick. Mr. Tony Weller said: "Have a passage ready taken for 'Merriker. The 'Merrikin Gov'ment vill never give him up ven vonce they finds as he's got money to spend, Sammy. Let the Gov'ner stop there till Mrs. Bardell's dead or Mr. Dodson and Fogg's hung vich last ewent I think is the most likely to happen first, Sammy, and then let him come back and write a book about the 'Merrikins as'll pay all his expenses and more if he blows 'em up enough." Dickens followed this advice and in both of his American books wrote ill-tempered but humorous criticisms of the American hosts who had given him such enthusiastic and hospitable recep-

tions as had previously been tendered to no foreigner other than La Fayette in 1824. Dickens at the time of this American visit in 1842 was only thirty years of age.

In 1836 Dickens, the author of a few sketches, published either anonymously or over the signature of Tibbs or of Boz, in the *Monthly Magazine,* the *Evening Chronicle* and *Bell's Life in London,* was a newspaper reporter of speeches by public men and of the debates in Parliament. A study of the letters written before 1835 to his friend Kolle and to Maria Beadnell, the object of his first love affair, shows a young man interested in theatricals and keenly susceptible to emotional stimuli of all kinds and to the feminine stimulus particularly. Dickens emphasized this characteristic when he wrote to Maria (Beadnell) Winter of himself and of his love in a letter twenty-five years

Henry Kolle

Maria Beadnell

later: "I fancy—though you may not have thought in the old time how manfully I loved you—that you may have seen in one of my books a faithful reflection of the passion I had for you and may have thought that it was something to have been loved so well, and may have seen in little bits of Dora, touches of your old self sometimes, and a grace here and there that may be revived in your little girls years hence for the bewilderment of some other young lover—though he will never be as terribly in earnest as I and David Copperfield were. I have a strong belief—there is no harm in adding hope to that—that perhaps you have once or twice laid down the book and thought 'How dearly that boy must have loved me and how vividly the man remembers it.'" At the time that Maria jilted him she made much of his attentions to her friend Marianne

THE SILENT SYSTEM

PICKWICK THE GAOLER

George Pierce Baker

Leigh. Professor Baker, who edited the correspondence, interprets the letters as indicating either that the Leigh girl was seriously interested in Dickens or that both young women were merely flirting with him. At the time he married Mary Hogarth, in 1836, he has been thought by at least one friendly critic, Gilbert K. Chesterton, to have been in love with both her sisters also. The truth seems to be that he was quite susceptible to feminine charms in a selfish kind of way and the final ending of his married life by a legal separation based on no conjugal sin whatever, seems to show that Dickens was in love with himself always, and with no woman at any time.

The kindly and sympathetic critic, Edwin P. Whipple, summarizes the work of Dickens as absolutely lacking in the power of generalization and describes his mind as never able, from a general-

Edwin P. Whipple

ized knowledge of human life, to philosophize on the characters he creates. In all his work, Dickens plays the characters in his own stories; he is both the actor who is living his own parts and the reporter who is recording the sensations and words and actions which the portrayal demands. When Dickens expressed to Forster his dread of having to describe the death of Little Nell, he confesses his own grief as the actor-reporter of a very personal, sad and touching experience all his own. When he draws the characterization of his rascals and his brutish criminals, he does not show such men as they really are. The acts are those of the thief and the murderer, but the words are those of Dickens the actor. Bill Sikes does no real cursing typical of the Anglo-Saxon ruffian the world around; even the stars of the well-recognized *** ** *

Dickens' Limitations

***** never appear in the Victorian pages of Charles Dickens. Whenever he wishes to indicate depravity in its deepest dye, it is done, not by the language of the low and degenerate, but by the amount of alcoholic liquor consumed, by indicated but unexpressed cursing or by cruelty, as, for example, Bill Sikes kicking his dog. When Sikes interferes between Nancy and Fagin to save the latter from Nancy's attack, he "gave utterance to about a couple of score of curses and threats the rapid production of which reflected great credit on the fertility of his inventions." Many curses are indicated, but Sikes never really says anything worse than "damn," usually with the "a" omitted, "d-mn."

The inception of Pickwick is of great importance to any inquiry as to the relative influence of author, artist and publisher on the plan of

Preface of 1847

the story and the development of the hero. Charles Dickens himself has placed on record more than once the point of view he wished to have accepted concerning the facts of the case. After acquiring the copyright of all his works he had written up to that time, he issued in 1847 a library edition and wrote a preface. Among other things he says concerning the proposal of Chapman and Hall, out of which Pickwick grew: "In the course of the last dozen years I have seen various accounts of the origin of Pickwick Papers; which have at all events possessed—for me—the charm of perfect novelty. As I may infer from the occasional appearance of such histories that my readers have an interest in the matter I will relate how they came into existence. . . . ." "The idea propounded to me was that the monthly something should be a vehicle for certain plates, to be exe-

Dickens' Tardy Explanation

cuted by Mr. Seymour and there was a notion either on the part of that admirable humorous artist, or of my visitor (I forget which), that a 'Nimrod Club,' the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected on consideration that although born and partly bred in the country I was no great sportsman, except in regard of all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel and had been already much used, that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I should like to take my own way with a freer range of English scenes and people and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting. My views being deferred to, I

Debt to Seymour Stated

thought of Mr. Pickwick and wrote the first number, from the proof sheets of which Mr. Seymour made his drawing of the Club and that happy portrait of its founder by which he is always recognized and which may be said to have made him a reality. I connected Mr. Pickwick with a club because of the original suggestion, and I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of Mr. Seymour."

The sincerity of this picture is open to serious question and even the frank acknowledgment that Mr. Seymour the artist, and not Boz, the reporter of the doings of the Club, is the real creator of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C., M.P.C., is later denied by Dickens in subsequent pronouncements. Edwin P. Whipple, in his series of prefaces to the American edition of the novels of Boz published in 1870, says that the statement in the preface quoted above was made, not

as Charles Dickens claims, merely to satisfy the interest of his readers as to how the Pickwick Papers came into existence, but for the express purpose of counteracting the impressions caused by certain "misstatements" regarding the part which Mr. Seymour had in the plan of the publication. The Seymour claims for recognition were put forward by his family soon after the artist's death, and thirty years later, in 1866, Robert Seymour's son again published the "Story." Dickens then published a statement in the *Athenæum* on March 31, 1866, the thirtieth anniversary of the appearance of the first number of Pickwick, and repudiated *in toto* all help from Seymour as to "incident, character, name, phrase or word," except the sporting tastes of Mr. Winkle. In a letter to his son a week later, he refers to the action of Mr. Seymour the younger as a monstrosity. And yet, Mr. Pick-

Statement in Athenæum

wick continued to sleep during the writing and publishing of the Pickwick Papers, for twenty months on the green paper cover of every number, and so far as anyone knows from the contents of the completed book, he never did wake up to land the fish which had become hooked on his neglected tackle. Mr. Pickwick sits there still in the library of every collector of first editions as a permanent monument to Robert Seymour as a creative collaborator of the Pickwick Papers.

Review of the Facts

Some facts are beyond dispute; the idea of a sporting club and its adventures originated with Seymour and was brought to Dickens by Chapman and Hall, who were the publishers for Seymour in previous work. Robert Seymour was a true sportsman both with rod and gun. Before Dickens was asked to be the reporter of the sporting transactions of the Club,

Study of Seymour's Drawings

Seymour had drawn some of the plates at least and the decorated green paper cover for the proposed serial. A study of the seven Seymour plates published in the first two numbers of the serial seem to tell, in 1836, a different story from that which the actor-reporter Boz would have us believe in 1847. The inference from Dickens' prefaces is that Mr. Seymour killed himself after the publication of the first number, and had had no more intimate connection with the publication beyond his contribution of the four plates in that number, and the three which illustrate the second, all of which were inspired by the written manuscript. It was claimed by Seymour's friends and family that the immediate success of Pickwick was in large part his, and that the entire credit for it was coolly, and with design, appropriated by Boz, to the total elimination of the artist. If we compare

Author and Artist Disagree

the text and the Seymour plates, it is evident that Dickens and Seymour were literary incompatibles and that all reference to sporting transactions was as foreign to the one as it was the chief interest of the other. It seems inevitable to conclude that a difference of opinion as to the development of the publication between the author and the artist must have occurred at the only meeting which brought these two men together, on that evening of April, 1836, forty-eight hours before Seymour shot himself. This meeting followed the publication and great success of the first number and the resulting controversy was not an original discussion of terms of authorship before publication, as claimed by Dickens eleven years later.

Two of the seven Seymour plates have very positive sporting features which were largely ignored and neglected by the young

Pickwick Addresses the Club

Seymour's Sporting Drawings

author. The first plate puts Mr. Pickwick in full view as the central figure standing on a chair making his farewell address to the Club on the occasion of his departure with his friends on their first travels. In the front center of the drawing, a part of the impedimenta is collected for the trip. These include a fowling piece, a fishing rod, a fish creel and a bait pail, and yet no member of the Pickwick Club was ever known to go fishing. The third plate is known as the sagacious dog refusing to enter, with the cockney huntsman Winkle, a field posted against stray dogs, and this incident is also inadequately developed in the text. Only one mention of sport, the poaching and shooting party which landed Mr. Pickwick in the public pound, enters the narrative after Seymour had died and the sporting incidents of the first number (Winkle's misadventure in shooting Tupman, and

that of Winkle and the dog, which is deliberately ascribed to another character, Jingle) are not emphasized enough in the text to warrant either the drawing of an illustration of Ponto the dog, or the continued use of the sporting advertisement of the pictorial title cover.

Seymour's Death

That chagrin and disappointment had some influence on Robert Seymour, subject as he was to fits of melancholy, to help drive him to suicide, seems all too plain. The explanation of Charles Dickens in his preface of 1847 seems but an attempt of the actor-reporter to present the case of the origin of Pickwick as he would believe the story should have been conceived and developed by the successful author, Charles Dickens, rather than a true story of events which preceded the publication of the Pickwick Papers in 1836, from the pen of an unknown writer, the young newspaper reporter, Boz. It

would seem probable that the pronouncement of Dickens so prominently stated in his prefaces of 1847 and later in that of 1867 is really Dickens' recollection of what took place at the only interview he ever had with Seymour, at which his publishers were also present. And that it is in no sense a declaration of plan by the author for the entire work in advance of publication, but a reply to the complaint and objections from the artist Seymour that the sporting transactions and adventures of his characters as portrayed on the illustrated cover and in the plates of the sagacious dog and the meeting at the Club, were being ignored, and the general character of his proposed publication was being changed and mutilated. The discussion as to one of the plates referred to by Dickens as taking place at that interview was probably concerning a fourth plate presented by Seymour and

Seymour-Dickens Interview

not about that illustrative of the Stroller's tale, as related by Dickens. There is no doubt that four illustrations had been advertised for each number and that only three came out with the second, because Seymour committed suicide rather, perhaps, than furnish a fourth.

Seymour's Unpublished Drawings

This assumption is made quite probable by the discovery that Seymour left two unfinished sketches to illustrate incidents in the fifth chapter of the Pickwick Papers, both of which represent events of a non-sporting character. It seems certain that Seymour was disgusted with his publishers and their newest protegé, Boz, when he found himself forced to carry out their ideas instead of his own and abandon the sporting character of his club of cockneys.

On the appearance of the third number with only two plates, those by R. W. Buss, the author and

THE SAGACIOUS DOG

the publishers were at some pains to explain the reasons for the change. This change of plan resulted, no doubt, in the Pickwick Papers becoming in no sense the report of the perils, adventures or perambulations of a club of cockney sportsmen, which had been planned by, and had originated in, the brain of the artist Robert Seymour. Dickens went on with his work and created his own Pickwick and transformed the publication into a more readable, a more humorous, a more generally human recital of the ludicrous and grotesque in the lives of the ordinary and common people of the England of 1836. It is far better that Pickwick is as he is today and not as Seymour would have made him, but it is unfair not to give to Seymour all the credit that his able pencil and his powers of caricature deserve.

Dickens' Non-Sporting Humor

The claims of Seymour, although more than half acknowledged by

Dickens Eliminates Seymour

Dickens himself in the preface of 1847, were bitterly denied by the same author in the *Athenæum* in 1866, and again were eliminated by a sin of omission from the preface of the *Charles Dickens* edition of 1867. This preface purports to be the same as that of 1847, but the wording is changed to read: "My views being deferred to I thought of Mr. Pickwick and wrote the first number; from the proof sheets of which Mr. Seymour made his drawing of the Club and his happy portrait of its founder:—the latter on Mr. Edward Chapman's description of the dress and bearing of a real personage whom he had often seen."

In this preface Dickens adds a full statement of his final review of the case, embodying his letter to the *Athenæum*. "It is with great unwillingness that I notice some intangible and incoherent assertions which have been made

Preface of 1867

professedly on behalf of Mr. Seymour to the effect that he had some share in the invention of this book or of anything in it not faithfully described in the foregoing paragraph. With the moderation that is due equally to my respect for the memory of a brother artist and to my self respect, I confine myself to placing on record here the facts. That, Mr. Seymour never originated or suggested an incident, a phrase or a word, to be found in this book. That, Mr. Seymour died when only twenty-four pages of this book were published, and when assuredly not forty-eight were written. That, I believe I never saw Mr. Seymour's hand-writing in my life. That, I never saw Mr. Seymour but once in my life, and that was on the night but one before his death, when he certainly offered no suggestion whatsoever. That, I saw him then in the presence of two persons, both living, perfectly

Dickens Adopts Chapman as Early Collaborator

acquainted with all these facts, and whose written testimony to them I possess. Lastly, that Mr. Edward Chapman (the survivor of the original firm of Chapman and Hall) has set down in writing, for similar preservation, his personal knowledge of the origin and progress of this book, of the monstrosity of the baseless assertions in question, and (tested by details) even of the self-evident impossibility of there being any truth in them. In the exercise of the forbearance on which I have resolved, I do not quote Mr. Edward Chapman's account of his deceased partner's reception, on a certain occasion, of the pretences in question."

Chapman, the survivor of the publishing house, added in 1849 his own claim to recognition as a collaborator in the birth of Mr. Pickwick. He stated that he had changed Mr. Seymour's design to make the hero a long thin man,

John Foster of Richmond

and had suggested that Mr. Pickwick represent a caricature of a fat friend of his at Richmond, named Foster. In 1872, Forster, the intimate friend and biographer of Dickens, and no relation of the Fosters of Richmond, published the first volume of *The Life of Charles Dickens* and attempted to settle this question for all time. His testimony, however, is rendered of questionable veracity because he follows the preface of 1867 and deliberately omits from his reprinting of the prefaces of Boz, the words of Dickens which admitted in 1847 that the happy portrait of Pickwick by Seymour in the first illustrations of the book, causes Pickwick to be always recognized and made him for all time a reality. In support of the view presented by him and to justify his conclusions, Forster quotes Chapman from a confirmatory letter written in 1849 thus: "As this

letter is to be historical I may as well claim what little belongs to me in the matter, that is, the figure of Pickwick. Seymour's first sketch was of a long thin man. The present immortal one he made from my description of a friend of mine at Richmond, a fat old beau who would wear, in spite of the ladies' protests, drab tights and black gaiters. His name was John Foster."

Dickens-Chapman-Forster Claims

To sum up, the sequence of events and expressions of opinion by Dickens and his friends might seem to have been about this way. In 1847 Dickens credits Seymour with the authorship of the portrait of Pickwick. In 1849 Chapman takes credit both for suggesting that Seymour's idea of a long, thin Pickwick be discarded and that a caricature of John Foster of Richmond be substituted. In 1867 Dickens adopts the Chapman idea and shuts Seymour entirely out of

the association of creative minds which started Samuel Pickwick on his noteworthy journeys, except in so far as Seymour was an artistic agent to portray the ideas of others. Finally, in 1872, Forster claims the last word and his final judgment upholds the truth of the Chapman-Dickens origin of Pickwick.

This raises an entirely new question: Who was the long, thin man suggested by Seymour as the hero of the forthcoming tales? No one seems ever to have sought him out, and yet he is not difficult to find among the acquaintances of Robert Seymour. It is no great stretch of the imagination to point to him as the antagonist of Samuel Pickwick in the game of chess referred to and pictured above. The imagination does not have to be unduly stimulated to find this "tall, long, thin" man as well as the short, stoutish, rotund man among the

Samuel Pickwick

Seymour's Portrait of Sam Weller

angling companions of Seymour. In fact, he is the subject chosen by Penn and Seymour to adorn the tale of the visiting angler who is sent a-fishing attended by a groom from his friend's stable. The two fishermen's identity, who are really Penn and the long thin man, is hidden under the names of *Jones* and *Thompson* and the attending groom is known as *Jack*. Jack appears to go fishing in top boots with a livery hat and waistcoat. If Jack is not Sam Weller in his youth I have been misinformed by the enthusiastic vendor of the book of Maxims for an Angler, when I bought it. At all events, "Jack" has all the habits of thought and action of a Weller, for when the tall, long, thin man, nothing daunted, after several mishaps, "now mended his tackle, went on fishing and when he thought 'good easy man' that the very moment for hooking another trout was arrived, there was a great

splash just above his fly, and the boy, exclaiming 'Damn un I miss'd un,' instantly threw a second brickbat at a rat which was crossing the river." Why is not the name of the tall, long, thin man, Pickwick; as well as that of the short, stoutish, rotund one? They both present a striking characteristic of the *Pickwick* family and wear circular spectacles. The Pickwicks were a large family and Samuel is known to have had relatives of the name. The Pickwicks seem to have selected biblical given names for their sons. Everyone knows Samuel Pickwick and many are acquainted with Moses Pickwick of Bath. It is a fair conjecture to advance a theory that the name of the long thin Pickwick whose adventures, because of Chapman's interference, are not depicted by Boz, and who, as well as his "cousin" Sam, was a follower of

Moses Pickwick

Izaak Pickwick

Walton, really was Izaak! Izaak Pickwick.

Both Pickwicks, "Samuel" and "Izaak," are found in many prints of Seymour published prior to the appearance of the Pickwick Papers, and it seems impossible to credit Chapman with any greater responsibility in the determination of the personal appearance of the most celebrated of all the Pickwicks than the casting of a deciding vote in favor of the fat cockney tradesman as distinguished from other suggestions presented by Seymour from the products of his pencil. That the choice happened on a likeness to one John Foster of Richmond seems also a coincidence first noticed in 1849, and brought forward at the request of Charles Dickens at that late date. It seems doubtful if John Foster was thought of at all in 1836 when Mr. Pickwick was being prepared for his notable

Damn'un I missed'un.

IZAAK PICKWICK AND SAM WELLER

début into literature. The Chapman claim may be classed as a typical Dickensian afterthought to explain a prior and inconvenient group of facts.

Percy Fitzgerald

In 1891 Percy Fitzgerald, writing his *History of Pickwick,* supports the views of Forster, and although he cannot be convicted of any sins of omission, he refers to an unidentified angling plate and the plate of the gaol warder in the *Squib Annual,* as the only possible evidence offered in opposition to giving the full credit for Pickwick to the author Boz alone. In these two plates he sees but little resemblance to Samuel Pickwick, General Chairman of the Pickwick Club. Referring to Mr. Pickwick asleep in his punt on the green cover, Fitzgerald disingenuously expresses his surprise in the appendix of his book that "It is remarkable that Mr. Pickwick through this whole story did not display the slightest ac-

quaintance with sporting." Later, in 1899, Fitzgerald in his *Pickwickian Studies* adopts without reserve the Chapman origin of a fat Pickwick and eliminates Seymour entirely, except as a mechanic who gave expression with his pencil to the ideas of Chapman and Dickens.

Sir Chartres Biron

Sir Chartres Biron, one of the most recent analytical critics of Dickens, follows the Forster-Dickens-Chapman version of Pickwick in so far as he mentions it at all and takes all creative initiative from Seymour "the Unfortunate," and accepts Chapman as responsible for the presence in the book of the well-favored and fat-fleshed Samuel, as against the Seymour ideal of the ill-favored and lean-fleshed Izaak. No one has suggested why Dickens and his clique were willing to accept his publisher Chapman instead of his artist Seymour as a collaborator to depict the face and figure, the clothes and character of

the greatest and best-known personality of all his writings.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

In 1911 Gilbert K. Chesterton wrote a series of prefaces for an edition of Dickens' novels, having previously published a critical study of the author. In these papers Chesterton relates many of the literary quarrels of Charles Dickens, but a knowledge of these does not permit Chesterton to see anything in the Pickwick papers except Dickens. He accepts the Chapman-Dickens-Forster version of the origin of Pickwick as an unchallengeable fact and refers in one place to Robert Seymour, who, and not the publishers, was the real originator of the Pickwick idea, in the very curt expression "a Mr. Seymour." Nevertheless, Chesterton understands Dickens thoroughly and in speaking of the little wars of Dickens he says: "It was a part of his pugnacious vanity that he refused to admit the truth of the mildest

criticism. Moreover, he used his inexhaustible ingenuity to find an apologia that was generally an after thought."

Edward Basil Lupton

Edward Basil Lupton, author of the recently published *Dickens the Immortal,* is a thorough student of his hero. In his more than one hundred pages he never once mentions Seymour or Cruikshank, the first two artists to illustrate Dickens' work. He ignores the very close resemblance in the style which exists between the work of Phiz and the illustrations in the first two numbers of Pickwick as drawn by Seymour. Not a word of Seymour when he attributes the conception and production of the world-renowned Pickwick to the sole initiative of Messrs. Chapman and Hall being stimulated entirely by the earlier writing of *Sketches by Boz.* He says of Phiz, however, "In Pickwick, Hablot Browne had a thoroughly original field for the

exercise of his art and he never excelled his work in that book." The fact that Phiz followed and copied Seymour in the portrayal of Pickwick and added no original idea of his own, is entirely lost sight of. Lupton's chief contributions to Dickensiana are his record of the rough treatment by Dickens of his friend Leigh Hunt in the parody of him portrayed in the character of Harold Skimpole and his study of the influence of Sir Walter Scott on Dickens' stories both as to incident and letter press. It might seem fitting to paraphrase Forster's criticism of Cruikshank and his claims concerning *Oliver Twist* and to congratulate Lupton that he is writing only after the jealous Dickens and the pugnacious, obstinate Forster are dead. None of these critics has explained away the fact that Seymour had drawn this advertising cover design on which Mr. Pickwick was asleep in his

Other Authors Aided Dickens

punt, some days before Boz had heard of the Club he was to help make famous. And neither Chapman, Forster, Fitzgerald nor anyone else has discovered the literary fact that Samuel Pickwick as shown above was an old friend of Robert Seymour's as a chess player, as an angler, as a genial guest in country houses, for at least three years before the corresponding members of the Pickwick Club started out on their perambulations, perils, travels, adventures and sporting transactions.

George Cruikshank

At the time of Charles Dickens' death, a similar controversy to this long forgotten claim made on behalf of Seymour as the original literary creator of Pickwick, was raised by an American admirer of George Cruikshank concerning his influence as a participating creator of Oliver Twist and Fagin the Jew. John Forster in his loud and aggressive manner tackles the ques-

K. Shelton Mackenzie

tion concerning the assertion of Dr. K. Shelton Mackenzie, an American, that George Cruikshank was a creative member of the literary combination which brought Oliver Twist and Fagin the Jew to life in the novel of Charles Dickens. Dr. Mackenzie wrote in the *Round Table* and quoted Cruikshank as saying that Dickens had seen some of his drawings of the thieves of London, especially of Fagin in his cell, and then decided "not to carry Oliver Twist through adventures in the country, but to take him up into the thieves' den in London, show what their life was and bring Oliver Twist through it without sin or shame. I consented to let him write up as many of the designs as he thought would suit his purpose and that was the way in which Fagin, Sikes and Nancy were created. My drawings created them rather than his strong individuality suggested my drawings."

Artist and Author

Forster does not hesitate, in Volume I of his *Life of Charles Dickens,* to call the statement false as "a tale of such incredible and monstrous absurdity as that one of the masterpieces of its author's genius had been merely an illustration of etchings by Mr. Cruikshank." George Cruikshank later in the same year (1872) published a sixteen-page pamphlet entitled *The Artist and the Author* and restated this matter in practically the same terms. That *Oliver Twist* and some works by at least one other than Dickens were produced in an entirely different manner from what would be considered as the usual course, for "I, the artist suggested to the authors of these works the original idea or subject for them to write out—furnishing at the same time the principal characters and the scenes." Forster returns to the subject in Volume II of his book, published in 1873, and in answer to

the recently published pamphlet of Cruikshank, blusters out: "Mr. Cruikshank is to be congratulated on the prudence of his rigid silence respecting it as long as Mr. Dickens lived." Forster offers as his complete and secure defense the following letter from Dickens: "I returned suddenly to town yesterday afternoon to look at the latter pages of Oliver Twist before it was delivered to the booksellers. When I saw the majority of the plates in the last volume for the first time." Forster's inference that the determining fact centering on "the two plates of Sikes and his Dog and Fagin in his Cell had not been seen by Dickens until his finished book was on the eve of appearance," does not follow from the words in the letter quoted concerning the "majority of the plates," as written by Dickens. Forster may call Cruikshank's claim a silly story, and justify any

Forster on Defense

further allusion to it only on the ground of his own and Dickens' regard and respect for Cruikshank as "an original genius well able to subsist of itself without taking what belongs to others," but this phrase might seem to apply with greater force to Dickens himself as referring to his dealings with Seymour and Cruikshank. This story presented with so much detail even by Cruikshank himself, was given short notice by the critics and no credence at all by the reading public.

Blanchard Jerrold

Blanchard Jerrold, the biographer of Cruikshank, writing in 1882 after the death of all the actors in these literary squabbles, follows Forster rather than his own hero, both as to the claims of Cruikshank and to those of Seymour, and places both artists entirely in the subordinate position of collaborating mechanics who only followed in detail the suggestions

of the great Charles Dickens. In view of the cavalier treatment of Seymour by Dickens, however, much might be thought, at this time, of these claims of George Cruikshank, although they were boo-ed off the stage in the 1870's by the mere force of the fame of Charles Dickens which has continued long after his death and undiminished up to the present time. To his enormous clientele in England and America, Charles Dickens was the deified exponent of the perfect novel and he could do no wrong. Any suggestion of outside help in his work was an unthinkable thing. It was sufficient that Charles Dickens had always said so himself.

The Impeccable Boz

Of course Seymour could never be counted as a member of Dickens' circle of friends in spite of the very intimate and powerful influence which he exerted on Dickens' first success and sudden leap

J. W. T. Ley

into prominence. But the facts would warrant more of a notice of his connection with the Pickwick Papers than is given him in *The Dickens Circle,* published by J. W. T. Ley in 1919. In writing of Phiz and how Hablot Knight Browne began his long association with Boz, Ley dismisses the whole question of Seymour as follows: "The first number of Pickwick appeared on March 31st 1836. Immediately afterwards the artist Seymour committed suicide and R. W. Buss took his place and after two more numbers he was deemed unsatisfactory and Hablot Knight Browne commenced an association with Dickens that was to last for practically a quarter of a century." No more than this is said of Seymour, although Ley "thinks that Buss was not given quite a fair trial but we have to remember in fairness to Dickens and the publishers that 'Pickwick' was

in parlous plight—that at this time it was almost a 'toss up' whether the work should be persevered with or not." Therefore Buss was discarded and Browne was "tried" and succeeded because he was "a marvel of pliability" and "amenable to discipline." Then Ley discusses the later troubles arising from the claims of priority of invention of the characters in *Oliver Twist,* which arose between Cruikshank and Forster, Dickens being dead, and adopts without reserve the Forster version of the affair and gives as a final verdict against Cruikshank, "In very truth, there can be no doubt that his mind was none too well balanced in his old age."

Sir William Robertson Nicoll

The collection of essays by Sir William Robertson Nicoll collected and published in 1924 under the title of *Dickens' Own Story* records several little-known incidents in the life of Charles Dick-

Abuse of Cruikshank

ens which are not entirely complimentary to his reputation for truthfulness and candor. Nicoll does not touch at all upon these controversies with Seymour and Cruikshank. The only references in the whole book which can be connected with either of these disputes are the following quotations, one of which appears in the review of Ley's *The Dickens Circle:* "George Cruikshank that extraordinary old rascal who really ought now to be exposed was an associate." The second is part of a defense of Dickens' letter to Professor Felton of Harvard concerning the conduct of Cruikshank and the nonconformist minister, Binney, at the funeral of the publisher William Hone. Nicoll goes out of the way to express his opinion that "it must be remembered that Cruikshank is not entirely trustworthy. In his disreputable old age he affirmed

that he suggested the story and incidents of Oliver Twist, but he completely failed to make his claim even plausible."

John Forster has certainly quieted most of the Dickens critics of the present generation so far as Seymour is concerned, but in view of the facts presented in this study it is difficult to agree with these many opinions, however unanimous they may be.

Frederic G. Kitton

Frederic G. Kitton, of all the analysts of Dickens, has presented, in his book, *Dickens and His Illustrators,* published in 1899, the most judicial study of these two literary wars of Charles Dickens; the first with Seymour and the last between Cruikshank and Dickens' literary heir and biographer, John Forster. Kitton has reproduced the original drawings of Seymour which were developed into the final plates for the illustration of the Pickwick Papers. These drawings at the

Seymour's Extra Drawings

time of publishing Kitton's book in 1899, were a part of the collection of Augustin Daly, of New York. There are two drawings in this set which illustrate "The Pickwickians in Mr. Wardle's kitchen" and "The Runaway Chaise." Both of these depict incidents in the fifth chapter of the book, which was the last installment to be issued with illustrations by Seymour. Neither of these drawings was developed into a plate by Seymour and neither appears in the published second number. It would seem most likely that it was a discussion over these two plates and not over that of the one accepted for the Stroller's Tale which was the subject of the discussion between Dickens and Seymour at their first and only interview. At all events this discovery shows that a fourth plate for number two of the Pickwick Papers was in process of manufacture when Seymour died.

Kitton could find in the previous work of Seymour only two prototypes of Mr. Pickwick. He cites the drawings in Penn's *Hints and Maxims for an Angler* and a single one of the plates in *The Heiress* published by Seymour in 1830. This latter Pickwick, however, does not wear tights or gaiters, though he is stout, his age about sixty, his spectacles circular and his head bald. It is the portrait of some unidentified member of the Pickwick family, but not that of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C., M.P.C. After reviewing all the evidence that he can gather, Kitton concludes that "we may reasonably surmise that had not Seymour communicated his idea to Chapman 'Pickwick' would never have been written. The proposal for a book similar in character certainly emanated from the artist and in this sense he was, of course, the originator of that work, while to

Claim of Seymour Justified

him also belongs the honor of inventing pictorially the portraits of the Pickwickians. But 'Boz glorious Boz,' vitalized the happy conception by imparting thereto such prodigality of fun, and so much individuality that 'The Pickwick Papers' at once leaped into fame, and, as all the world knows, was received with acclamation by every section of the public."

Claim of Cruikshank Endorsed

Kitton also has passed upon the claims of Cruikshank, which have been described above, and his final judgment is that "It is, however, no exaggeration to say that the pencil of George Cruikshank was as admirable in its power of delineating character as was the mighty pen of Charles Dickens and that in the success and popularity of 'Oliver Twist' they may claim an equal share."

It would seem more reasonable to picture Dickens in the years between 1836 and 1840 as a growing

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Growth of Dickens' Power

force in the world of letters, than as the brilliant star bursting forth into full radiance at the outset of his career. His initial success with the *Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist* was a remarkable achievement, but, at the present time, it would not seem to diminish his reputation in any degree to acknowledge that his earliest efforts were stimulated by the ideas and the inventions of the artists who were associated with him in the work. When he began to write Pickwick, at the age of twenty-three, his English was crude, his method of constructing a story was immature. The influence on the development of his style of his great friend, and subsequent biographer, John Forster, who was a much better trained and more experienced writer, will never be fully known. Forster has obliterated all trace and left no record of the kind of criticism and the extent of corrections which were included

in the "proof-reading" work in which, after the twelfth number of Pickwick and the second of Oliver Twist, he was associated with Dickens throughout his whole career. The extent of this help and influence is made evident by the fact that, at the time of his death, Forster possessed practically all the original manuscripts of the novels of Dickens.

Genius of Dickens

Dickens' genius developed and grew as his work increased and his maturer experience was brought to bear upon it. It was unquestionably influenced by his collaborators and contemporaries, by artists and authors, by publishers and critics, and the acknowledgment on his part of his debts to Cruikshank and Chapman, to Forster and Seymour, would have left a picture of a more lovable and less conceited character than a study of the facts compels one to adopt and believe in.

Why should any devotee at the

shrine of the impeccable Boz feel hurt at such an acknowledgment concerning him, who portrayed his father as Micawber and as Dombey, the girl who jilted him as Dora and later as Flora, and who wrote his own biography into David Copperfield? Dickens' indebtedness to outside influence is the chief element of his success as a portrayer of human beings and character. The discovery that Seymour and Pickwick were brother anglers and old acquaintances in 1836 leads conclusively to the inference that such outside influences began early to be a prominent factor in Dickens' work.

Dickens' Novels Based on Facts

His was a curious combination of genius, and his early training on a newspaper, and his intense interest in private theatricals and in the stage foretold the full development of Charles Dickens as an expert actor of the characters of his fancy and as the most gifted re-

Character of Dickens

porter of the sad and the gay incidents in his stories that has ever appeared in English literature. As a money earner, he was also remarkable, for the returns from his writings had never been equaled by any previous writer and the financial success of his appearances as an actor-reader of his own work remains today an unusual event. It is no small part of the genius of Charles Dickens that he controlled his public to the last. It is beyond question that no other modern author has ever been taken by such a large public, both English and American, at his own full value of himself, or has held his reputation for so long a time. His conceit kept him to the end, jealous of sharing one little part of his reputation even with a man who helped him suddenly to gain an eminence from the bottom of the literary ladder of London, and in 1866 he reacted more violently

and less generously to the renewal of the Seymour claims by Robert Seymour, Jr., than he did as a younger man in 1847.

Seymour a Real Help to Dickens

This story of Mr. Pickwick as an angler would seem to have been missed, or deliberately overlooked by most of the critics of Dickens. Although it is not entirely creditable to Dickens' generosity, it throws considerable light on a personal controversy between Charles Dickens and the family of Robert Seymour, which has long been forgotten and to revive which is a justice to the memory of a clever and humorous artist and good sportsman.